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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Follow-up to the fourth and fifth periodic reports of States parties

Argentina*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in its concluding comments of August 2002 (see A/57/38, part III, paras. 353-355), requested a follow-up report to the Argentina's fourth and fifth periodic reports, to be submitted by January 2004 for consideration by the Committee in June 2004.

For the initial report submitted by the Government of Argentina, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.39, considered by the Committee at its seventh session. For the second periodic report submitted by the Government of Argentina, see CEDAW/C/ARG/2, CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.1 and CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.2, considered by the Committee at its seventeenth session. For the third periodic report submitted by the Government of Argentina, see CEDAW/C/ARG/3, considered by the Committee at its seventeenth session. For the fourth report submitted by the Government of Argentina, see CEDAW/C/ARG/4. For the fifth periodic report submitted by the Government of Argentina, see CEDAW/C/ARG/5, considered by the Committee at its exceptional session.

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Follow-up to the fifth periodic report of Argentina

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Introduction

This follow-up to the fifth periodic report of the Argentine Republic is submitted as requested by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

The Committee considered the fourth (September 1996-October 1999) and fifth (February 2000-December 2001) reports and the country's replies to the questions raised by the pre-session working group, and noted the lack of information provided on the impact of the crisis on the female population and its negative effect on the implementation of the Convention. It consequently decided to request Argentina to submit a follow-up report in January 2004, taking into account the areas of concern under the Convention and the recommendations made by the Committee in its concluding comments and including expanded, updated and systematized information and sex-disaggregated data as far as possible about the impact of the crisis on the country's female population and the measures adopted to reduce and overcome its negative effects on women.

1. Political and institutional situation of the Argentine Republic

As a result of the serious institutional, political, economic and social crisis in the country, which led to the resignation of the president-elect in 1999, a process of institutional change began in 2002 and led to the 2003 elections conducted in all provinces for mayors, governors and national, provincial and municipal legislators, in accordance with the national and/or provincial electoral laws, following which Mr. Néstor Kirchner took office as President of the Nation on 25 May 2003.

Regarding compliance with the women's quota, the current female membership of the National Congress is the highest ever attained, i.e. 41.67 per cent in the Senate and 33 per cent in the House of Representatives. Legislative elections in most of the provinces also met this quota, in accordance with the provisions governing each jurisdiction.

Concerning legal security, the process of renewing the membership of the Supreme Court of the Nation has begun, through resignations and, in a few cases, impeachments.

During 2002 and 2003, the main public policies aimed at coping with the crisis and high poverty indices were the economic emergency laws, the health emergency law, the national food emergency programme and the Programme for unemployed heads of household. As from June 2003 the following were put into effect throughout the national territory: (1) National Food Security Plan, representing an improvement over the emergency approach taken in the previous plan; (2) National Plan on Local Development and Social Economy; and (3) Family Plan. The provision of the Fiscal Equilibrium Act of July 2001 reducing the salaries and pensions of government employees and pensioners by 13 per cent was cancelled and the amounts deducted restored retroactively. It was decided that private sector employees would receive fixed increments amounting to a total of $200. Representatives of trade unions and management began negotiations towards the signing of collective agreements, with changes in wage increments and other improvements in working conditions. The Minimum Adjustable Living Wage for

2004 was raised to $350. In addition, all persons over 70 years of age who lack social security are eligible for a life pension not subject to taxes.

2. Economic and social context

The serious economic and social crisis which Argentina has been experiencing since mid-1998 led to a grave political crisis that in turn led to an early change in government, at the end of 2001.

At the beginning of the 1990s Argentina began an extensive reform process that transformed the country's social and productive structure. This reform process, together with the adoption of a fixed exchange rate, made it possible to attain high growth rates during the first part of the decade. However, the economic opening led to the disintegration of a good part of the industrial fabric. Investment was channelled into the least labour-intensive sectors. There was a decrease in demand for workers, causing the unemployment rate to rise to unprecedented levels from the mid-1990s onwards.

The rise in unemployment led to a drop in household income and a rise in poverty, which led to a growing fragmentation of the social fabric.

The macroeconomic policies adopted by the national Government in 2002-2003 and the strategy implemented by the current government have borne fruit. The gross domestic product estimate for the second quarter of 2003 is 7.6 per cent higher than for the same period in 2002. In particular, the goods-producing sectors grew by 12.8 per cent. The services sectors also showed a growth of 3 per cent over the previous year. The unemployment rate for October 2003 was 14.3 per cent and the labour force participation rate 43 per cent.

3. Policy lines of the new national government

Mr. Kirchner's governance project is based essentially on the idea of rebuilding a national capitalism that creates alternatives making it possible to restore upward social mobility by promoting active policies aimed at the country's development and economic growth, job creation and better and fairer income distribution. The State regains a fundamental role, creating opportunities by strengthening possibilities of access to work, education, health and housing.

Social policy

As stated earlier, the Minister of Social Development, Ms. Alicia Kirchner, has defined the bases of the national social development policy. The federal nature of the policy will be reinforced, enabling it to respond to the diverse situations in the country. The projects to be supported will have to meet three basic goals currently required by the country:

Food security

Local development for the social economy

Family development

Social policy will not be merely assistance-based but will have to guarantee a leap in quality and territorial equity through the creation of projects such as cooperatives and social undertakings having direct impact on people and a strong element of social control.

Main programmes being implemented by the Ministry of Social Development

National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy: "Let's Get to Work"

National Food Security Plan

Comprehensive Family and Community Promotion Plan

4. Principal areas of concern and recommendations of the Committee

A. Women and poverty

The Committee is concerned at the situation of women resulting from the growing increase in poverty, and extreme poverty, which has spread to more than half the population, and which can have a disproportionately heavy impact on the female population. Of special concern are women heads of household who are living in poverty and unemployed, with dependent children, and women from rural areas, indigenous populations and the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

The Committee recommends that the State party should pay special, ongoing attention to the situation of women and should take the necessary measures to prevent women, especially those from rural areas, indigenous populations and the most vulnerable sectors of the population, from bearing the heaviest burden of the crisis. It also requests the State party to ensure that the Programme for unemployed heads of household with children under 18 or disabled children includes a gender perspective in order that the few resources that are available for social allowances may be distributed without discrimination.

Overview

Most macroeconomic variables began to show signs of recovery from mid-2002 onwards and throughout 2003. The recovery was notably reflected in increased economic activity, falling unemployment, and increases in salaries, pensions, and minimum living and flexible wage levels.

However, the most recent available data, from the Household Survey of May 2003 (when the present Government came into office), do not yet reflect this steadily emerging economic recovery. Instead, the data continue to show the effects of a structural crisis that was particularly severe during the 1990s, and include poverty indicators derived from the income-line method[1] (see annex, table 1).

[1] Poverty is measured by the Poverty Line (PL) method, which looks at households' income levels to determine whether, when purchasing goods and services, they are able to meet certain food and non-food needs regarded as essential (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC), 2002).

An initial glance at table 1 might suggest that poverty affects male heads of household more severely. However, if we separate single-occupancy households (mostly occupied by elderly women living alone) from multi-occupancy households, the picture looks somewhat different. In general terms, the impact of poverty is greater among the latter households, and especially those headed by women (see annex, table 2).

Women heads of household and poverty

In order to see how poverty affects women, we must break down the data for women heads of household by type of household.

According to the 2001 Population Census, 27.7 per cent of Argentina's 10,075,814 households are headed by women. However, if we look at the different types of household, we see that the percentage of women heads of household varies considerably. Women account for 56.7 per cent of single-occupancy households and 86.6 per cent of incomplete nuclear families (one spouse plus children). However, in the case of complete nuclear households (both spouses plus children), households headed by women account for just 5.6 per cent of the total. Data from the Permanent Household Survey of May 2003 indicate the same trend.

It is important to note how the data change according to region: the northeast and Patagonia have the lowest percentage of single-occupancy households headed by women, while in the metropolitan region of Greater Buenos Aires, the level is above average. However, this region has the lowest percentage of multi-occupancy households headed by women, while the northeast and northwest regions, with their large rural populations and high poverty levels, have the highest percentage of multi-occupancy households headed by women.

The poor

The increase in the poor population reflects the strong deterioration seen over the last decade in the living conditions of more than half of Argentina's urban population. The under-15 age group has been hardest-hit (7 out of 10 are classified poor), and both genders have been equally affected (see annex, table 3).

This data is derived from the income line, which is particularly sensitive to variations in wages and inflation. Moreover, it is important to stress that over the past two years, and especially under the current administration, efforts have been made to strengthen social services, such as food programmes, free health care and medicare, scholarships, etc., which tend to alleviate the impact of poverty levels as defined by purely income-based indicators.

Unemployment and poverty

The differences in unemployment rates between men and women are minimal, whether among the poor or the non-poor. The poor have clearly been significantly affected by unemployment (which, moreover, is directly linked to low income levels). For the year 2002, unemployment rose among men and women, and in 2003 employment levels picked up among both groups (see figure 1).

If the data for heads of household are broken down according to poverty level, it is obvious unemployment levels are higher among the poor. However, among the poor, unemployment declined significantly in 2003 after rising sharply in 2002.

Unemployment levels are lower for non-poor households, which were not as deeply affected by the crisis in 2002 (see figure 2).

If the only households considered are those with children under 18, unemployment rates among poor heads of household are higher.

In 2003 unemployment rates for poor heads of household were higher among men. In the case of women heads of household, unemployment fell sharply from 2002 to 2003 (from 23.1 per cent to 12.9 per cent). The importance of this data lies in the impact of unemployment and falling incomes upon minors. However, in non-poor households, unemployment among women with children was higher than among men (see figure 3).

Programme for unemployed heads of household

One of the newest tools for softening the impact of the crisis is the programme "The right to social inclusion: Programme for unemployed heads of household" which was introduced in April 2002.

According to Programme records, the total number of beneficiaries at the end of 2002 was about 1,735,000. Data from the 2001 National Census show that beneficiaries thus represent 67.3 per cent of the unemployed in the 18-and-over age group and 4.7 per cent of the country's overall population.

The percentage of women beneficiaries is high, at an average of 67 per cent, and this does not vary significantly according to region. Of all women beneficiaries, just 26 per cent are given as heads of household, and most of these households are among the poorest 40 per cent. The average age of women beneficiaries is 35 and their education level, in line with the rest of the population, is higher than for men: 11 per cent did not finish primary school, 43 per cent did not finish secondary school, 33 per cent did not finish college and 13.5 per cent were college graduates.

The design, implementation and evaluation of the Programme do not take the gender perspective into account. The higher number of women beneficiaries is due to various specific family circumstances (opportunity to work, age of minor children, family arrangements, marital status, hours worked, etc.).

The Programme covers approximately 12 per cent of all households, with rates of participation varying according to poverty level (although poverty level is not one of the selection criteria). It covers 25 per cent of poor households (twice the level for all households) and about 38 per cent of very poor households, indicating a tendency for the plan to focus more heavily on the poorest sectors of society.

Whereas the average size of households nationally is 3.5 people, in the case of Programme beneficiaries the average household size is 5.1 where the beneficiaries are men, and 5.3 where they are women. There are no significant differences between Greater Buenos Aires and the country's interior regions. Similarly, households with women beneficiaries have a higher proportion of children under 18 and a lower proportion of adults.

Research data[2] indicate that access to the Programme has brought a 4 per cent reduction in the incidence of poverty among participating households, with a greater impact in the case of extreme poverty. On average, 20 per cent of households accepted into the programme would have been in a state of extreme poverty if they had not been accepted. The data reveal certain differences between levels of extreme poverty, although the rate of Programme application is similar. Among households that are unable to purchase the basic basket, 69 per cent are headed by men and 53 per cent by women.

The Programme is scheduled to continue during 2004, with certain modifications. It functions as a feeder plan for the National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy "Let's get to work", which is a system designed to support initiatives for socio-economic development at the local level, aimed in particular at low-income sectors. Under Decree No. 1253 of 29 December 2003, the duration of the National Employment Crisis Plan and the Programme for Unemployed Heads of Household was extended to 31 December 2004.

The restructured Programme is expected to incorporate the gender perspective over the short and medium term, combining policies on active equality with policies designed to reduce risks and uncertainties and to enable participants to learn the skills and attitudes they will need if they wish to enter the workplace. The differences between the Programme's impact on men and women should also be studied. This would provide the basis for designing targeted solutions for each category.

Rural and indigenous women

The Rural Women Project of the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Agricultural Development runs the Rural Action Network, which comprises individuals and institutions working with rural women throughout the country. Its aim is to "incorporate the issue of rural women into the public agenda ... as well as to increase the visibility of rural women as active social and political participants who have the potential and capacity to contribute towards the design and implementation of policies targeted at the sector ...".

The Rural Action Network organized the National Symposium of Rural and Aboriginal Women, which was held in Buenos Aires in October 2003. The symposium represented a response to demands from over 300 groups composed exclusively of rural women. Preparatory meetings were held at the local, municipal, provincial and regional levels, enabling the women to begin discussing specific issues. The 400 women delegates represented about 600,000 rural women. The issues raised included the sector's main problems: access to land, access to quality public health, education, environment, production, work, identity, daily life and women's rights. A number of conclusions were reached concerning the proposals discussed by participants. Those conclusions were sent to the highest levels of the Government. In December 2003, work began on looking for ways to resolve some of the issues raised. With respect to education, the programme for the repair and construction of rural schools, which had been suspended in 2000, was reactivated. Work has begun in the province of Formosa and will be extended to other provinces. In the Indigenous Community of Peña Morada en Salta, a new school facility is being prepared for next year.

[2] ILO Technical Cooperation Project. Series of working documents: 1. "Beneficiaries of the Programme for unemployed heads of household"; 2. "Programme for unemployed heads of household: A gender-based impact analysis". August 2003.

The National Women's Council (CNM) and the Rural Women Project of the Department of Agricultural Development have formulated a joint programme to train rural and indigent women in how to start up agricultural projects.

In March 2002 the CNM signed an agreement with the Argentine Union of Rural Workers and Stevedores (UATRE).

Thus far, training workshops have been held for trainers in violence against women, with materials supplied for repeating workshops around the country and on women, equity and work, for the involvement of women in productive activities, which includes modules on gender, rights and business planning (for more details see following section).

Women's employment

The Committee is concerned at the precarious nature of women's employment, in particular the situation of unemployed women in the informal sector.

The Committee recommends that the State party should make all necessary efforts to guarantee compliance with the labour legislation and protect women from the violation of their basic labour rights and from discriminatory dismissals.

Overview

The year 2002 marked a turning point in the deterioration of working conditions among the population. Jobs and unemployment levels recovered slightly in 2003 from the previous year, and in some cases exceeded 2001 levels (see annex, table 4 and figure 4).

At present, 46 per cent of women work in the informal sector of the economy, which is slightly lower than the percentage for men. Informal employment rose between 2001 and 2002, but declined in 2003. The fall was essentially due to a decline of more than four percentage points in women's participation (see table 5).

Paid domestic service makes up a significant portion of the informal sector, accounting for 14.1 per cent of female employees in 2003. However, domestic service work has declined over recent years due to declining middle-class incomes.

Type of employment

Among employed women, salaried workers account for 79 per cent (for men, this figure is lower, at 67 per cent). However, 55 per cent of salaried women receive either no social benefits at all or only partial benefits.

The proportion of women employed in skilled professional positions is low (8 per cent). Among men the proportion is similar, indicating that there is no gender-based difference in this sector of the labour market.

Most women (70 per cent) perform unskilled jobs. They are mostly employed in domestic service, teaching, social services and health care, the textile industry, other personal services, restaurants and hotels, public administration and defence and the retail trade. Nearly two thirds of women work in these professions (see table 6).

Quality of employment

The situation in the urban sector as a whole is one of considerable vulnerability in employment: more than 30 per cent of salaried workers do not receive retirement benefits (black-market work); hourly underemployment affects a quarter of those in work; almost one fifth are unskilled and work for their own account; over one third earn less than US$ 200 per month; one fifth perform work that is temporary, unstable, or of unknown duration, and 7 per cent are in employment training. In general, these levels are higher for women, and over two thirds of working women display at least one unsatisfactory employment-quality indicator (see annex, table 7).

One area that should be stressed is that of employment training courses. Although they are not true jobs, in a climate of structural crisis, such as the present, they offer a public policy tool that can help improve the situation of households in a situation of extreme vulnerability. These households, which account for 7 per cent of the employment market, make up 12 per cent of women's employment.

Policies and programmes implemented by the Government in the area of employment

In January 2002, when the Economic Emergency Law was enacted, it was decided to pay double compensation for unfair dismissal, for a period of 180 working days, to staff then in employment. This measure has been extended on various occasions under a series of emergency decrees. The final date of 31 December 2003 has been extended once again, until March 2004. It is not possible to say with any certainty that there have been discriminatory dismissals based on sex.

National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy "Let's get to work", administered by the Ministry of Social Development

National Women's Council (CNM)

National Women, Equity and Work Programme

The Programme's overall objective is:

> "To promote, from the perspective of gender equity and equal opportunities, the development of women's capacities and self-esteem, with a view to improving their position in the workplace".

It is hoped that the training process will equip participants with tools that will help them integrate into the workplace.

The following printed materials have been produced:

Teaching manual (4,000 copies) and workbook (12,000 copies).

Since the end of 2002, CNM has been providing training workshops for instructors in the Women, Equity and Work Programme in the provinces of Chaco, Chubut, Catamarca, Río Negro and Córdoba, with the participation of the provincial and municipal women's offices and civil society organizations.

- Training workshops for civil society organizations;

- Argentina Housewives' Union (SACRA);
- National Women's Network of the National Argentine Union of Rural Workers and Stevedores (UATRE);
- Social and Political Institute for Women, Proposal Foundation, and Women's Study and Research Centres;
- Women's Support Network.

Training has been provided to an estimated 435 instructors, who will pass on their training to at least a further 2,250 people. It is estimated that at least 45,500 women in various provinces will benefit directly.

CNM offers technical assistance and review of all projects designed by the groups receiving training.

This training gives women the chance both to look for job opportunities and to earn real incomes, which increases their sense of independence and empowerment. In particular, women are informed about productive projects funded by various State agencies and provincial and local governments, including the national "Let's get to work" programme, the National Bank of Argentina's National Fund for the creation and consolidation of microenterprises, and the programmes of the small and medium-sized enterprises division. One crucial aspect of the Programme is the ongoing exchange with the local offices of the Ministry of Social Development, which coordinate the development of social and productive plans.

During 2004, in addition to training instructors across the country, the Women, Equity and Work Programme will promote the establishment of a national network of women entrepreneurs and/or women's associations throughout the country, using a database of women's productive projects; disseminate best practices; ensure permanent access to the database of the "Let's get to work" programme; and identify sources of credit and/or subsidies for the development of productive projects, with a view to informing the groups concerned.

The Council has also approved funding for 40 productive projects, within the context of the Programme to promote the strengthening of the family and social capital (PROFAM), and under the Federal Programme for Women has approved a total of 22 projects on employment and rural women, to which it provides technical assistance and materials from within the Women, Equity and Work Programme. These projects will be implemented in most of the country (18 provinces) during 2004.

Tripartite Argentine Commission on Equality of Opportunities and Treatment between Men and Women in the Workplace

Activities of the Tripartite Commission, 2002-2003.

Training, instruction and awareness-raising activities;

Formulation of draft legislation (on parental leave, projects for new mothers and draft union quotas act);

During 2003, work began on setting up commissions. Three commissions were formed:

Observatory for Women in the Workplace and Production. The aim of the Observatory is to study and evaluate the issue of women in the workplace. Subcommission on Regulations and Subcommission on Actions, which is working to set up an office for the reporting and investigating of workplace violence and sexual harassment.

Instruction and training

Promotion of Provincial Tripartite Commissions. During 2003, two trips were made, one to Tucumán Province, and one to Corrientes Province. The objective was to encourage, advise and support the two provinces in their efforts to establish Tripartite Commissions.

On the recommendation of the Commission, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security issued decision No. 656/02, which establishes the incorporation of the gender perspective as the focus for the design and management of all actions related to jobs, and to vocational and technical guidance.

B. Comprehensive health care for women

The Committee is concerned at the high maternal mortality rate and at the fact that, with the increasing deterioration in health services, women, in particular those in situations of vulnerability, are losing their right to comprehensive health care, in particular as regards sexual and reproductive health. The Committee is also concerned because, in this critical context, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is tending to increase, especially among women.

The Committee recommends that the State party should guarantee women's access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and that it should adopt the necessary measures to reduce the high maternal mortality rate. The Committee recommends that the State party should pay special attention to preventing and combating HIV/AIDS.

Overview

Fertility and maternity among adolescents

The fertility rate among adolescents has been falling since 1980, although to a lesser extent than among other age groups. Adolescent fertility is relatively high compared to the overall fertility rate. About 15 per cent of births are to adolescent mothers (those under 20 years of age), which means that in 2002, 101,753 out of a total 694,684 births were to women under 20 years of age (3,000 of those births were to women under 15 years of age). Adolescent fertility rates vary according to the region. In the City of Buenos Aires, adolescent births accounted for 5 per cent of births in 2001, whereas in Chaco, which has the country's highest rate of adolescent births, the rate was 24 per cent (Ministry of Health, 2002). Between 1991 and 1998, the percentage of women who delivered children before the age of 20 rose from 14.9 per cent to 16.2 per cent. In 2002, the percentage fell back to 14.8 per cent.

Maternal mortality

The maternal mortality rate (MMR) was relatively stable throughout the 1990s, sometimes showing a slightly declining trend. However, if we compare 2000 levels with 2002 levels, we note a fairly significant increase, with the MMR rising from 39 to 46 per 100,000 live births over the period.

However, the national averages hide significant regional differences. Whereas at the national level, the 2002 rate was 46 per 100,000 live births, in Buenos Aires the figure was 14 per 100,000 live births, and in Formosa, over 160 (Ministry of Health, 2003).

One third of maternal mortality is due to intentional abortion which, because it is illegal, affects almost exclusively poor women, especially those in the 20 to 34 age group. Thirty-one per cent of maternal deaths are due to complications from abortion, 53 per cent to direct obstetric causes, and 16 per cent to indirect obstetric causes (Ministry of Health, 2003). Direct obstetric causes are closely related to pregnancy and delivery and are due to problems linked to health care coverage and the quality of health services: family planning, prenatal care and the ability of health staff to cope with haemorrhage, sepsis and abortion complications (Centre for Studies on State and Society, CEDES, 2003).

Diseases of the genital organs and the breast

Breast cancer is the most common cause of tumour-related deaths. In 2002, 5,001 women died of breast cancer, accounting for 4 per cent of the total number of deaths.

In Argentina, between 800 and 900 women die every year of cervical cancer. Data for the last decade shows an increase in the mortality rate for this type of cancer (Ministry of Health, 2003).

Over the last decade, breast cancer has been responsible for an average of 4,830 female deaths per year. It causes the highest number of tumour-related deaths among women, accounting for 20 per cent of all female deaths. The number of deaths from breast cancer increases with age: women aged from 65 to 74 and those over 75 are affected at a rate of 93.9 and 199 per 100,000, respectively (Ministry of Health, 2002). For the secondary prevention of this type of cancer, there is a need for access to and rational use of mammograms: unsystematic data show that, in Argentina, some women have an annual mammogram (even though international rules do not require one) while others have no access to such technology (CEDES, 2003).

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS

By May 2002, the cumulative total of AIDS cases in Argentina had reached 21,865. Taking into account the delay in reporting cases, it is estimated that there are now 25,411 cases with a cumulative total of 60.1 per 100,000 (Ministry of Health, 2002). Cases of AIDS in individuals under 13 account for 7 per cent of the total number and are almost exclusively cases of vertical transmission.

The ratio of infected men to infected women dropped from 20.7 in 1988 to 2.24 in 2002 (National Programme to Combat Human Retrovirus, AIDS and STDs, Ministry of Health, 2002). Currently, 79 per cent of reported cases in individuals

over 12 occur in males and 21 per cent in females. Among the female population, the disease spikes twice in its distribution by age group, once at early ages (of the total number of infected females, 16 per cent are under 10) and again between 25 and 34 (46 per cent). Among men, however, the disease has a broader age distribution: 10-year-old boys account for 4 per cent of the total owing to the prevalence of the epidemic among adult males (National Programme to Combat Human Retrovirus, AIDS and STDs, Ministry of Health, No. 9, 2002).

The increase in the number of cases of AIDS among women and the extent of heterosexual transmission shows that women have become a vulnerable group (Bianco et al., 1998).

Policies and programmes in the health sector

National Programme for Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood, National Act No. 25.673, promulgated by means of Decree No. 1282/2003

National Act No. 25.673 of October 2003, which establishes the National Programme for Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood, marks an effective step towards the attainment of respect for human rights through the reduction of maternal mortality, the number of hospital admissions for abortions and the adolescent fertility rate.

Its significance lies in its emphasis on prevention, the free and universal provision of contraceptives, access to information and counselling, early detection, the promotion of female participation in decision-making and the quality and extent of sexual and reproductive health services.

The Programme sets out the following objectives:

- Reduce maternal mortality rates by 40 per cent by 2005 in jurisdictions where the rate is double the national average and by 25 per cent in those where the rate is equal to or below the national average
- Reduce by 50 per cent, as compared to 2000 and 2001 levels, the number of hospital admissions due to post-abortion complications by the time the Programme has been in place for five years
- Reduce adolescent fertility rates by 40 per cent by the time the reproductive health programme has been in place for five years in each province
- Provide supplies of contraceptives for all health-care workers attached to each provincial programme for reproductive health and responsible parenthood
- Ensure that the provinces with established programmes for reproductive health and responsible Parenthood achieve 50 per cent information coverage by 2005 and 100 per cent coverage by 2010
- Ensure that the provinces carry out counselling activities in the area of sexual and reproductive health
- Ensure that all women covered by the provincial programmes have pap smears

Summary of the activities undertaken within the framework of the National Programme for Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood[3]

These activities can be summarized as follows:

- Distribution of contraceptives to all jurisdictions. They are delivered to a single warehouse, designated by each jurisdiction, for distribution to health-care workers
- Monitoring the distribution of contraceptives, carried out by the Monitoring and Assessment Unit of the Mother and Child Programme
- Training in the area of counselling for members of interdisciplinary teams working at the provincial level
- Awareness-raising for technical staff and professionals in each jurisdiction
- Training for health workers involved in the Programme. Training workshops are being held and there is a support manual for health-care workers
- Technical assessment in order to carry out on-the-spot assessments of teams working at the central provincial level
- Community outreach activities: meetings with non-governmental organizations, the National Directorate for Youth, the Council for Children and the Family, the Women's Support Network and various social actors in order to outline relevant community work and develop an action plan for 2004
- Social communication targeted at various groups of beneficiaries, carried out by the Training and Communication Section of the Mother and Child Programme

Policies and programmes to prevent and deal with adolescent pregnancy and motherhood

The Chamber of Deputies has approved a draft law on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, which promotes the safeguarding of all the rights recognized by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This draft law has been awaiting approval by the Senate since 2002.

The government of the City of Buenos Aires has two laws that deal specifically with the rights and needs of adolescents in the area of sexual and reproductive health: Municipal Act No. 114 on the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in the City of Buenos Aires and the aforementioned Act No. 418 on Reproductive Health and Responsible Parenthood, which gives priority to reproductive health care for adolescents.

Pursuant to this legislation, the Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents carried out training and preventive activities (in 2002, 6,000 adolescents from the City took part in workshops in secondary schools).

One of the stated objectives of National Act No. 25.673 on Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood is promoting the sexual health of adolescents and ensuring that the entire population has access to information, guidance, methods and services

[3] Information provided by the National Directorate for Maternal and Child Health of the Ministry of Health, the body responsible for implementing the Programme.

in the area of sexual health and responsible parenthood. Article 4 states that the Act falls within the scope of the rights and obligations relating to parenthood but that the child's best interests and full enjoyment of the rights and guarantees enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child will in all cases be regarded as having primary importance.

Main activities to prevent HIV/AIDS and STDs

Project LUSIDA for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and STDs was launched in 1997.

The project geared its activities towards large-scale and targeted social communication; training for teacher-trainers at primary and secondary school levels, the development of subprojects for civil society intervention to prevent HIV/AIDS among vulnerable populations; quality control in blood banks; the prevention of vertical transmission and diagnosis, treatment and care of patients through new methods such as voluntary and anonymous diagnosis centres, outpatient hospitals and home care.

The main achievements of the programme include: making use of the networks of civil society organizations as the driving force behind its activities; human resources training and the transfer of technology to provincial and municipal programmes; wider coverage for prevention programmes through gradual adaptation of services to local conditions and needs.

At present, the National Programme is continuing the work begun by LUSIDA by working closely with civil society in the various national and international forums, participating actively in the development of internationally financed projects and in the Country Coordinating Mechanism for the management of the Global Fund. Likewise, it is continuing to disseminate preventive messages through television commercials, campaigns geared towards adolescents and young people, the launch of the free telephone assessment service on HIV/AIDS and the preparation, publication and distribution of training materials on sexual and reproductive health.

In addition, public hospitals meet the full cost of testing, care and drugs for women who do not have social security coverage or prepaid medical care and they provide infant formula to prevent transmission through breastfeeding.

Act No. 25.543, adopted in 2001, on testing all pregnant women for human immunodeficiency virus, makes it obligatory to offer an HIV test as part of prenatal care. Public assistance, social service and prepaid medical institutions must include the test in their coverage. Pregnant women must give their informed consent and sign a document agreeing to the test or refusing it.

Other legal provisions and programmes in the area of health

Act No. 25.649, on the promotion of the use of generic drugs, was approved in 2002.

Its aim is to reduce the cost of health care in individual budgets, since generic prescriptions enable patients to choose between — and pharmacies to offer — essentially similar drugs on the basis of their price.

Act No. 25.590 on the National Health Emergency was promulgated by means of Decree No. 486/2002. By means of Decree No. 1210 of December 2003, the executive branch extended the health emergency until 31 December 2004. The obligation to prescribe generic drugs and the *Remediar* Programme, which provides free drugs for 15 million people, have accordingly been extended. The Compulsory Emergency Medical Plan (PMOE) has also been extended for 180 days.

In 2003, the *Cuidarnos* mother and child insurance plan was created for a two-year period within the framework of the Primary Health Care programme. It provides full coverage for 700,000 pregnant women, 9 million women of childbearing age and 3.5 million children under five. It will be implemented first in provinces with the greatest needs, such as those in the northeast, where 75 per cent of women who give birth have no social security coverage. This programme will be co-financed by international organizations.

The *Remediar* Programme is expected to run from 2003 to the end of 2004 and will be implemented in every province. It consists of the free distribution by community health centres of drugs to deal with 80 per cent of diseases and will involve 6,200 community health centres in primary care facilities. The free drugs will be distributed in a container bearing the word "*Remediar*" in order to prevent their resale. The programme will be financed with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), which will grant credits amounting to $150 million.

Other programmes and activities implemented by other bodies with regard to comprehensive health for women

National Women's Council

Framework agreement between the National Women's Council (CNM) and the Ministry of Health: 28 May 2002, regarding participation in the emergency health plan for treatment of women of all ages and the mother-and-child group.

Meeting between CNM and the Federal Health Council (COFESA), North West regional branch. Participation in training workshops and seminars on sexual and reproductive health and primary health care in the provinces of Tucumán, Santiago del Estero, Salta and in the city of Buenos Aires. Total number of trainers: 350 people. Production and distribution by CNM of information and resource pamphlets on maternal and child mortality, reproductive health legislations, genital and breast cancer prevention and menopause. Quantity: 1,000 copies of each.

During the last half of 2002 and the first quarter of 2003, CNM implemented the Technical Assistance Project on Gender (PROGEN), with funds donated by the Japanese Government through the World Bank.

General objective: the inclusion of a gender perspective in the projects financed by the World Bank in Argentina.

Several booklets were published in support of the health programmes of different government departments and of civil society organizations: *Contraception: the Right to Choose; Fighting AIDS: Prevention; Shared Parenting and Safe Motherhood; Health and Sexual and Reproductive Rights: Working toward Fairness;* and *Violence: No Excuses, Only Rights.*

In 2003, CNM and several civil society organizations worked under the authority of the Ministry of Health and to develop regulations for National Act 25.673/02, which established the National Programme for Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood.

Intervention of the National Women's Council in support of the Ministry of Health in *amparo* proceedings brought by a civil society organization in Córdoba, seeking to prevent the application of Act No. 25.673 on the Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood anywhere in the Argentine Republic and to have the Act declared unconstitutional.

Appeals published in the leading national press in support of the National Programme of Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood, signed by CNM and representatives of the Federal Women's Council in the following provinces: Buenos Aires, Catamarca, Chaco, Chubut, Córdoba, Entre Ríos, Formosa, La Pampa, Mendoza, Misiones, Neuquén, Río Negro, Salta, San Luis, Santa Cruz, Santa Fe, Tierra del Fuego and the autonomous city of Buenos Aires.

During 2002 and 2003, the National Women's Council approved 28 women's comprehensive health-care projects through the Federal Plan for Women and 27 women's reproductive health-care projects under the PROFAM programme.

Provincial bodies

Río Negro has been the first province to enact legislation to make vasectomy and tubal ligation legal forms of contraception. Pursuant to Act 3.450 establishing the provincial reproductive health and human sexuality programme, public hospitals are authorized to carry out these operations on request. Similar legislation has been proposed in Neuquén province.

The autonomous city of Buenos Aires adopted Act No. 1.044 of 2003 on pregnancies incompatible with life, by means of which pregnant women with a foetus suffering from a disease incompatible with life outside the womb will be able to terminate the pregnancy in public hospitals in the autonomous city of Buenos Aires. The Act does not oblige women to terminate the pregnancy if they do not wish to, nor does it commit doctors to carry out the practice if they choose not to on moral grounds. In such cases hospital managers should immediately find replacements to carry out the operation.

Since November 2002, hospitals in the city of Buenos Aires have been obliged to implement a protocol of action for rape victims, which is the first medical psychological treatment programme in our country for people who have suffered this kind of sexual assault.

The province of Mendoza is the only one to distribute, through its network of health centres and public hospitals, free emergency contraception for women who have had relations without taking precautions and who want to avoid an unwanted pregnancy. They are also available in police stations and to forensic medical examiners for use in rape cases.

Draft legislation

In the legislative sphere, several members of the National Congress have submitted bills with a gender emphasis, whose content includes women's health issues.

C. Women and education

The Committee is concerned that the crisis has considerably affected women's, and particularly girls', access to public education because of a lack of resources to start or continue their studies.

The Committee recommends that the State makes every effort possible to guarantee girls' access to education on equal terms with boys and pays special attention to those girls from the more vulnerable sectors.

Overview

In the area of education, in recent years the participation and retention rates of girls within the education system have been increasing, and they have been attaining higher levels at school-leaving age.

In designing education policies priority is given to ensuring that students — both boys and girls — enter and remain in school education, reducing grade repetition and drop-out rates. Throughout the country basic mandatory enrolment applies to all children from 4 to 14 years old.

In all provinces, mandatory basic general education and non-mandatory multi-track education is free in State-run, public schools. Similarly, the right of all to education without discrimination based on gender or religion has been incorporated into the common core curriculum of basic general education and multi-track education, primarily in the subjects of citizenship education and social sciences.

Under the current administration, the 2004 education budget has increased by 20 per cent over that of 2003. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology awarded 300,000 scholarships for 2003 and monies corresponding to outstanding scholarships from 2001 and 2002 were also paid.

The national student scholarship programme for 2004 will finance 350,000 young people between the ages of 13 and 19, from throughout the country, who are in danger of dropping out of school and who belong to the most socio-economically vulnerable families. Resources will reach the schools directly, with no intermediary intervention of any kind, in order to ensure that the money reaches the beneficiaries' mothers, who are to receive the scholarship money. The amount of the scholarship consists of an annual payment of $400 for each eligible person and is paid in two equal instalments. They represent a total investment of 140 million pesos each year. Registration for the scholarships is carried out in every one of the schools, in order to guarantee widespread awareness of the competition. There is no firm data regarding the percentage of scholarships going to girls, but everything suggests that it is similar to the percentage of girls enrolled, which exceeds the percentage of boys, especially at the multi-track level for which the scholarships are intended.

Selection of 13,690 rural schools with an annexed hostel, marginalized urban schools and special education schools (June 2003), to form part of the Ministry of

Education's comprehensive programme for educational equity (scholarships, repairing and expanding schools, drinking water, electricity, heating, food, teaching materials).

During 2004, the province of Buenos Aires, which accounts for 38 per cent of the total population of the country, and which has high levels of poverty, is launching the programme "Everyone at school learning", in order to guarantee the right of children, young people and adults to education. Its main objectives include: total enrolment of school of five-year-old children; strengthening of rural education for the full inclusion of the children of workers and rural producers; development of social and educational policies, such as scholarships; rural transportation; school food service; provision of school supplies; special attendance scheme for pregnant pupils; creation of nurseries to look after the children of students in the multi-track cycle etc.

The Programme for unemployed heads of household stipulate that one of the requirements for participation is the provision of documentary proof that the children of beneficiary homes are attending educational establishments.

Access to education

The EPH figures for May 2003 show that just over 12 per cent of the population aged 25 and older did not complete primary school. At the other extreme, more than a fifth attended a university or higher education establishment. In general, there are no gender differences in the group which completed university level, with the exception of a greater proportion of women (annex, table 8).

Literacy

In Argentina illiteracy is almost non-existent and gender differences are not noticeable. The following table contains the literacy rate, calculated as the literate portion of the population (those who can read and write) aged 15 and older, divided by the total number of people within the same age bracket, multiplied by 100 (annex, table 9).

Formal education attendance

Formal education attendance — evaluated by means of the net school enrolment rates — is high at the primary level, where significant gender differences are not observed. The school enrolment rate drops at the secondary level, where women are in a more advantageous situation. The same situation, to an even greater degree, is found at the next level: in the higher university category, the gender differential is the highest (see annex, table 10).

D. Violence against women

The Committee is concerned that, although the State party has extensive legislation in the area of prevention and treatment of domestic violence, this problem has worsened. The Committee is concerned that the crisis might increase the risk of trafficking in women and girls and their exploitation for purposes of prostitution.

The Committee requests the State party to ensure that its Recommendation No. 19 on violence against women is taken into account and that all necessary measures are taken to provide full protection to the victims, punish those responsible and check the growing trend towards violence against women. The Committee requests the State party, especially, to evaluate the trafficking of women and girls and to strengthen domestic measures and, if necessary, international measures in cooperation with other countries that are countries of origin, transit or destination for the exploitation of women and girls for purposes of trafficking, in particular to prevent the exploitation of prostitution.

Overview

1. ***Domestic violence***

As requested, data was collected to see if there was a link between increased domestic violence and the crisis in Argentina. An analysis of the number of complaints filed with the courts between 1995 and 2003 shows a slight but steady increase, which can be attributed to awareness-raising, and to women's increased awareness of their rights and of how to exercise them effectively (see annex, figure 5).

Of this total number of complaints, women accounted for 78 per cent of the victims of violence in 1999, 83 per cent in 2001 and 81 per cent in 2003.

Moreover, according to data provided by the Directorate-General for Women of the municipal government of Buenos Aires, which runs a leading centre that serves as a shelter and provides integral care to women, 1,509 women were treated in the first half of 2002 and 2,198 in the first half of 2003.

The experts from the centre who assessed these figures feel that the increase in the number of persons receiving assistance has more to do with awareness-raising policies and the Centre's active community initiatives than any real aggravation of the problem.

In any case, they do not have the research capability to generate plausible data on the interdependence of the different variables. Since this issue is being regarded as a multicausal phenomenon involving various factors, increased impoverishment of the middle class and the aggravation of poverty in the poorer sectors, could, in some cases, be factors triggering family crises.

The Office of the Procurator of the Buenos Aires Provincial Court, through the Criminal Police Unit, reports that in 2003, 13,896 complaints of cases of domestic violence — 31 per cent of all those filed in the province — were received by its 40 decentralized branches. In 75 per cent of domestic violence cases, the victims were women; in 2 per cent, they were men; and in 23 per cent, they were both women and men. These data do not represent any significant increase over the data for 2002.

Implementation of programmes

The National Women's Council has continued to carry out its National Programme of Training, Technical Assistance and Awareness-raising Activities relating to Violence against Women. The Programme offers training in the establishment and/or strengthening of interdisciplinary teams throughout the country for the prevention and/or treatment of domestic violence and the establishment of

inter-institutional and social networks: provincial and municipal women's offices (AMPs and AMMs), hospital services, judiciary and educational personnel, members of the police force and civil society organizations. Special materials to train the trainers were used in the preparations. The Programme operates throughout the country.

One aspect of the Programme involves entering cases in the Domestic Violence Register and offering violence prevention and treatment services. About 50 services from throughout the country participate in this project. The purpose of the Register is to provide information to help determine, inter alia, the profile of the population receiving assistance, prior incidents of domestic violence, the extent to which they are at risk at the time of counselling, how the women came to the Services and their socio-economic profiles.

Various Argentine provinces receive technical assistance and training materials under the domestic violence projects contained in the Federal Plan for Women. In 2002 and 2003, a total of 30 projects were approved for the provinces of La Pampa, La Rioja, Misiones, Neuquén, Salta, Catamarca, Chaco, Chubut and Río Negro.

An assessment of the health sector's Domestic Violence Treatment Services is being conducted.

The CNM also operates an inter-institutional network for dealing with violence (RIAVI), which held two seminars in 2002 and 2003, respectively. The purpose of this network is to facilitate the exchange of experiences between agencies and services dealing with the problem in Buenos Aires. Participants include hospital centres and services, the Ministry of Justice, the CNM and the municipal government of Buenos Aires.

This year, a total of 51 domestic violence projects of women's municipal offices and civil society organizations were incorporated into the Programme to Strengthen the Family and Build Social Capital (PROFAM) of the CNM, to be launched in 18 provinces in 2004.

Brochures for the International Day against Violence against Women were elaborated jointly by the CNM, the Special International Office for Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Under-Secretary for Human Rights; 60,000 copies were printed. The Day culminated with a radio campaign, film screenings on the topic and the national broadcasting of a television programme on channel 7.

The Buenos Aires Directorate-General for Women runs the Programme on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Assistance to its Victims, which has a 24-hour hotline called "Women's Line" that is in service seven days a week. The hotline deals with violence control, and offers counselling and assistance to female victims of violence. The Directorate operates a shelter for women victims of violence with minor children in high-risk situations, seven Integral Care Centres for Women and a shelter which offers personalized care to teenage mothers.

In August 2003, "New Life", a programme to treat domestic violence victims, was launched in the city of Córdoba. Under the Programme, a $200 subsidy is disbursed over six months to help female victims of violence cope in situations of risk. The Programme is designed to control violence and provide treatment through expert teams composed of attorneys, psychologists, doctors and social workers.

Despite major policy strides and progress in the implementation of actions in this area, it should be noted that much still remains to be done on many fronts, including the creation of specialized services to treat female victims of violence in most of the provinces; coordination among the various services (areas of health, violence, women's affairs, security, justice); the operation of networks among non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the establishment of a registration system in various services that would generate serious, reliable and comparable data; accessibility to the courts with free legal aid; and greater dissemination of information on the protection of rights.

It will also be essential to conduct ongoing national campaigns to stop violence against women, to train the judiciary and members of the police force in gender violence, and to establish shelters throughout the country and a programme to support and reintegrate female victims of violence.

2. *Sexual violence*

Another aspect of violence against women that needs to be addressed is that of so-called sex crimes. According to information provided by the National Directorate of the Criminal Police within the Ministry of Justice, in 2002, the rate of sex crimes against women rose to 33.75 cases reported per 100,000 inhabitants, while, among men, that rate was 5.62 per 100,000. Females were victims of sex crimes in 6,447 cases, 2,100 of which involved rape.

3. *Trafficking in persons, especially women and children*

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, its supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the supplementary Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air were ratified in August 2002 by National Act No. 25.632.

The feeling that something must be done about the problem of trafficking in persons gained ground and visibility with the ratification of the Convention and Protocols, and a number of public agencies, both at the national level and in Buenos Aires, particularly CNM, the Directorate-General for Women and the Buenos Aires Council for Children's and Adolescents' Rights, the Attorney-General, specialized civil society organizations, experts and academics, were mobilized.

One response was to establish a Working Commission composed of national and Buenos Aires agencies and NGOs, which, in turn, was subdivided into three working groups: (1) one composed of jurists to study and propose appropriate legislation; (2) one composed of civil servants to gather information on and harmonize public policies, proposals and agreements; and (3) one to conduct campaigns to disseminate the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. There are plans to include prostitution and the transfer and internal displacement of persons as related topics.

Various meetings on trafficking in persons were held in the National Congress with the participation of Latin American legislators and public and private agencies. In 2002, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship held the First Interdisciplinary Day on Trafficking in Women.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, through its Special International Office for Women's Affairs, is elaborating a draft "Protocol of Action" to coordinate joint activities with other ministries and national and provincial institutions (Office of the Attorney-General, Office of the Under-Secretary for Human Rights, Police Department, CNM and provincial women's offices) with a view to preventing and combating the scourge of trafficking in women and children and assisting victims of trafficking in order to protect them from being victimized again and facilitate their social reintegration in a climate of absolute respect for their human rights.

Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR): The issue of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, was raised by Argentina at the Ninth MERCOSUR Special Meeting on Women (REM), held in Asunción on 22 and 23 May 2003. On the basis of the Argentine proposal, paragraph 9, setting out the Governments' commitment to place the issue on their agendas and to carry out joint and coordinated activities in the area, was added to the Joint Declaration of Heads of States members of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile. The text of this paragraph is as follows:

> "They expressed their grave concern about the growing problem of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which, in addition to constituting a human rights violation, is closely linked to such threats as illegal trafficking in persons, drug trafficking and the spread of transnational organized crime."

In this connection, it was recommended that the competent MERCOSUR entities should include this topic in their agendas and work together to carry out joint activities.

A binational Argentine-Dominican Meeting on trafficking in persons, sponsored by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is scheduled to take place in the first half of 2004.

E. National women's mechanisms

The Committee notes with concern the attempt to downgrade the National Women's Council and the lack of a formal strategy for coordination of the different State agencies.

The Committee notes the importance of continuity, autonomy management and coordination of the national mechanism for the advancement of women at this time of crisis in the country and recommends that they should be strengthened.

The National Women's Council (CNM) was created in 1992, reporting directly to the Office of the President. In 2002, during the Duhalde Administration, the National Council for Social Policy Coordination was established, presided over by Mrs. Duhalde, and CNM became a dependency of that body, although the budget is handled by the General Secretariat of the Office of the President. Dr. Alicia Kirchner is currently Chairman of the National Council for Social Policy Coordination.

In 2000 the National Women's Council suffered budget cuts affecting the performance of its mandate and functions. It has two internationally financed programmes, and in essence the three national plans stress the gender perspective,

but approach it as part of a comprehensive concept of family, since social policy is conceived as a whole, and not from a purely sectoral standpoint. The Senate recently approved a bill to establish such a national mechanism, and the bill has gone to the Chamber of Deputies for its consideration.

Provincial women's mechanisms

By December 2003 there were 21 provincial women's offices at varying stages of institutional development. All these offices make up the Federal Women's Council, where the implementation of public policies and the realization of CNM programmes throughout the country are discussed.

Main activities and programmes carried out by the National Women's Council (CNM)

Since 2003 CNM has been implementing various programmes and activities to promote gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, including programmes of training and assistance relating to the gender perspective; women's rights and citizenship; political participation; women, equity and work; sexual health and responsible parenthood; violence against women; strategic planning; and project development. These activities are carried out nationwide through the provincial and municipal women's offices, government agencies and civil society organizations.

CNM prepares or helps prepare reports to be submitted to international organizations (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Population Fund, Inter-American Commission of Women, United Nations Committee on Violence against Women, among others).

It participates in workshops on the Millennium Development Goals in Argentina and in the development of indicators for gender equity and the empowerment of women.

It monitored compliance with the Electoral Quota Act during the national legislative elections in 2003, which involved contacting election boards throughout the country, filing an appeal with the federal court with electoral jurisdiction in the city of Buenos Aires and providing technical assistance to federal councillors on monitoring the application of quotas in their jurisdictions.

It complies and organizes data at the national and/or provincial level on areas of concern under the Convention, for publication on CNM's web site.

CNM works with members of the National Congress and follows up bills introduced in the legislature that have a direct or indirect impact on the situation of women.

It took part in the sixth meeting of ombudsmen from the entire country in August 2003 and presented a proposal for updating the agreement on cooperation and technical assistance between CNM and the provincial and local ombudsmen's offices.

During the course of 2003, three meetings of the Federal Women's Council were held to present and discuss proposed work plans and their implementation throughout the country. Civil society organizations were invited with a view to putting together joint initiatives and policies.

Federal Plan for Women

The programme is financed jointly by the national Government and the Inter-American Development Bank (1999-2003). The aim is to strengthen the institutional capacity of CNM and the provincial and municipal women's offices throughout the country. It also involves civil society organizations concerned with women's issues.

Results and impact of the programme to December 2003

Training and technical assistance were provided to 15 provinces, creating an installed capacity of 1,800 persons trained, who are responsible for passing along the training they received. The output was the creation of a variety of services at the local level and municipal women's offices.

The National Women's Information System is developing an Internet network with data-producing agencies at the national level, such as the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC), the System of Information, Monitoring and Evaluation of Social Programmes (SIEMPRO), the statistical offices of the ministries, the legislature, the judiciary and national ministries. In addition, an intranet jurisdictional coordination network with contact points is being developed, consisting of the provincial women's offices, the provincial statistical offices and civil society organizations (academic institutions and other organizations specializing in women's and gender issues).

A total of 97 projects have been financed under the support for local initiatives component, relating to reproductive health, domestic violence, labour force participation, women's rights and citizenship, involving some 400 participants. The projects have benefited 5,240 persons directly and 27,100 indirectly and have had a qualitative impact on their communities in terms of changing practices, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

Qualitative indicators with a gender perspective have been developed to measure the results and impact of the projects financed. The preparation of outreach materials has expanded the number of persons benefited. At present, 250 projects in five more provinces are being evaluated.

The plan is to extend the programme to cover all 23 provinces.

Technical assistance project on gender (PROGEN)

PROGEN is a programme of inter-agency cooperation, exchange and coordination of resources, designed to facilitate response to gender-differentiated needs and interests in projects financed by the World Bank in Argentina. International seminars were held and technical assistance given in 15 provinces on reproductive health and domestic violence.

Programme to strengthen the family and build social capital (PROFAM), financed through a World Bank loan

PROFAM is being carried out by the National Women's Council and is intended to support projects that focus on assisting poor families by supporting the development of each member, from a cross-cutting gender perspective. It entails promoting collaborative initiatives by actors at all jurisdictional levels to

incorporate the gender perspective in the development, execution and oversight of public policies.

The programme has three components. The first is on strengthening the family, with two subcomponents: (i) establishing an Equity Fund to support initiatives to achieve gender equity between women and men in all spheres of social life, both public and private, by narrowing the equal opportunity gap between them; and (ii) building social capital by financing activities that promote the creation or enhancement of social networks. The second component is on raising awareness about community and gender through information campaigns, exchange of positive experience and horizontal integration of collaborative sectoral initiatives. The third component is on institutional development to enhance the management capacity of the National Women's Council to execute the programme effectively.

It is hoped that PROFAM will also help to strengthen informal social networks, reduce isolation among families, encourage families to take a greater part in formulating local programmes and build permanent relations between civil society organizations and local governments in order to sustain practices that support families.

With regard to progress in implementation, 1,560 project proposals were submitted in response to a call for proposals in November and December 2002. Of those 292 were selected. Proposals were submitted by associations of organizations, second-tier organizations, civil society institutions and organizations and local governments.

In 2004 the execution of the selected projects will begin, and a new national invitation to submit proposals for social projects will be held. The subject areas in which proposals will be invited are reproductive health, responsible maternity and paternity, domestic violence, rights and citizenship, day care for children and school support, environment, rural development, tourism, production support activities and formation of collaborative networks.

Annex

Statistical information

Table 1

Evolution of poor households by gender of head of household. Totals for urban areas, May 2001, 2002 and 2003

(Percentages)

Year	*Total*	*Female head*	*Male head*
2001	25.1	20.6	26.9
2002	39.5	32.1	42.5
2003	42.1	35.8	44.8

Source: Prepared by CNM, based on the Permanent Household Survey (EPH) (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC)).

Table 2

Evolution of poor households by gender of head of household and composition of the family. Totals for urban areas, May 2001, 2002 and 2003

(Percentages)

	Single parent households			*Multiparent households*		
Year	*Total*	*Female head*	*Male head*	*Total*	*Female head*	*Male head*
2001	5.5	3.3	9.1	28.6	29.0	28.4
2002	9.7	7.5	13.6	44.8	44.5	44.8
2003	14.2	9.9	22.0	47.2	48.5	46.7

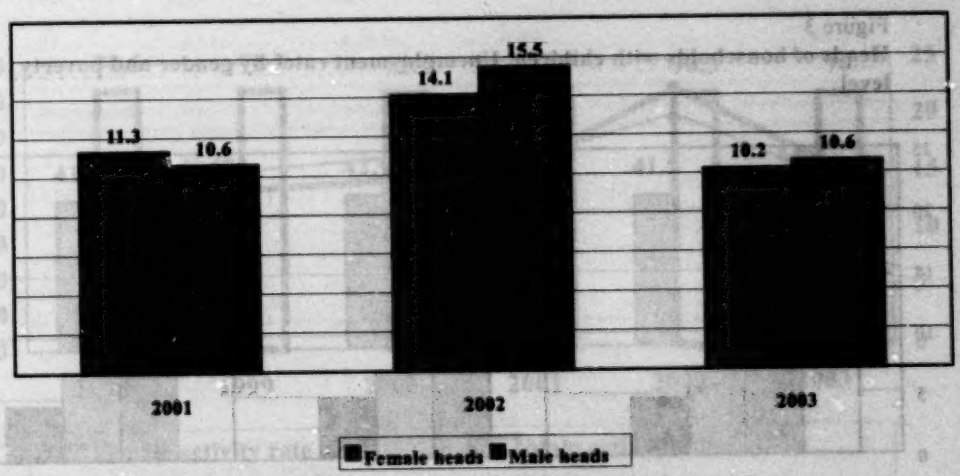
Source: Prepared by CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Table 3
Evolution of poverty rates by age group: individuals under the age of 15 and over the age of 64 by gender. Totals for urban areas, May 2001, 2002 and 2003
(Percentages)

Population	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Poor population (1)	35.3	51.7	54.3
Women	34.2	50.0	53.2
Men	36.5	53.6	55.6
Poor population under the age of 15 (2)	51.1	69.1	71.0
Women	51.4	68.3	71.0
Men	50.7	70.0	71.0
Poor population over the age of 64 (3)	14.5	24.7	27.9
Women	12.3	22.2	26.0
Men	17.7	28.7	30.8

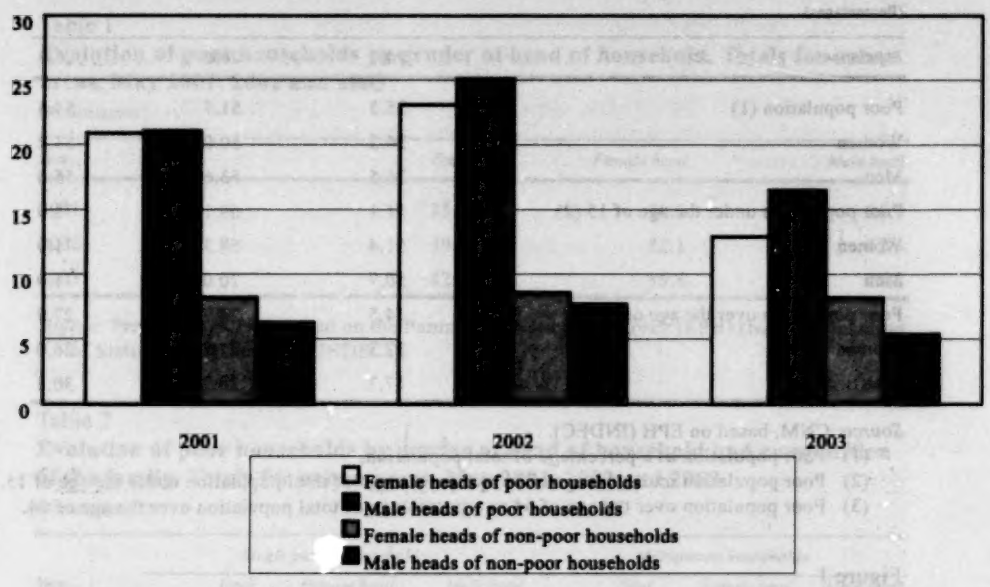
Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).
(1) Poor population as a percentage of total population.
(2) Poor population under the age of 15 as a percentage of total population under the age of 15.
(3) Poor population over the age of 64 as a percentage of total population over the age of 64.

Figure 1
Heads of household. Unemployment rates by gender



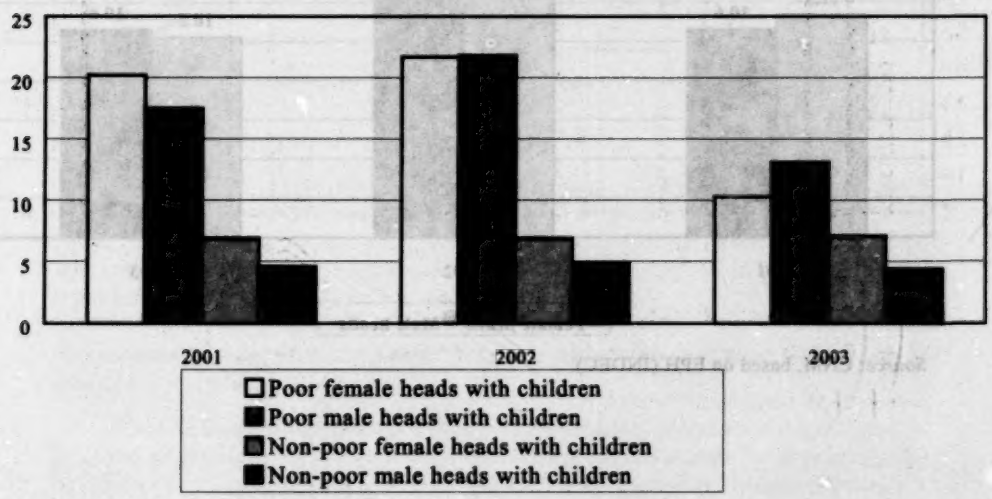
Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Figure 2
Heads of household. Unemployment rates by gender and poverty level



Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Figure 3
Heads of households with children. Unemployment rates by gender and poverty level



Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Table 4
Population over the age of 14. Female, male and global activity, employment and unemployment rates. Totals for urban areas, May 2001, 2002 and 2003

	2001	*2002*	*2003*
Activity			
Total	56.5	55.1	56.4
Women	42.9	41.9	44.7
Men	71.9	70.3	70.0
Employment			
Total	47.2	43.2	47.6
Women	35.8	33.4	38.1
Men	60.2	54.5	58.6
Unemployment			
Total	16.4	21.6	15.6
Women	16.6	20.2	14.8
Men	16.2	22.4	16.2

Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Figure 4
Activity and unemployment rates for women and men

Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Table 5

Population employed in the informal* sector by gender. Totals for urban areas, May 2001, 2002 and 2003

Gender	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Female	49.5	50.3	45.8
Male	45.0	47.2	47.2
Total	**46.9**	**48.5**	**46.6**

* The informal sector includes: self-employed persons, unskilled employees, salaried employees working in establishments with up to five employees, domestic service and unpaid workers.

Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Table 6

Employed population by occupational group and job classification by gender. Percentages and female presence. Totals for urban areas, May 2003

Occupational group	*Women*	*Men*	*Total*	*Female presence*
Employers	1.7	5.5	3.9	18.5
Self-employed	17.9	27.1	23.2	33.1
Salaried employees	78.9	66.5	71.8	47.0
Unpaid work	1.5	0.8	1.1	57.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**42.8**
	(3 742 207)	**(4 996 866)**	**(8 739 073)**	
Job classification	*Women*	*Men*	*Total*	*Female presence*
Professional	8.2	9.4	8.9	39.5
Skilled	21.9	14.6	17.7	53.0
Unskilled	69.9	76.0	73.4	40.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**42.8**
	(3 725 256)	**(4 978 883)**	**(8 704 139)**	

Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Table 7
Employment quality indicators by gender. Absolute values and percentages of total employed population. Totals for urban areas, May 2003

Employment quality indicators	*Women*	*Men*	*Total*
Total number employed	3 742 207	4 997 897	8 740 104
Salaried employees without pension provision	60.0	61.4	60.8
Hourly underemployed	28.1	18.0	22.4
Unqualified skilled self-employed	6.3	4.8	5.4
Non-permanent employees (temporary workers, odd jobbers or contracts of indefinite duration)	21.4	19.2	20.1
Domestic service	14.1	1.6	6.9
Construction	0.3	11.1	6.5
Employment programmes	12.1	4.1	7.5
Population with at least one of these qualities	67.1	65.3	66.1

Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Table 8
Population over the age of 25 by level of education and gender. Totals for urban areas, May 2003
(Percentages)

Level of education	*Women*	*Men*	*Total*
No education	1.4	1.4	1.4
Incomplete primary education	12.0	10.3	11.2
Complete primary education	28.9	28.9	28.9
Incomplete secondary education	14.2	17.8	15.9
Complete secondary education	19.9	18.4	19.2
Incomplete higher/university education	9.0	10.8	9.8
Complete higher/university education	14.6	12.4	13.6
Total	**100.0 (7 310 470)**	**100.0 (6 140 122)**	**100.0 (13 450 592)**

Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Table 9
Illiteracy rate and gender differential. Totals for urban areas, May 2003

Women	*Men*	*Differential*
98.6	98.5	0.01

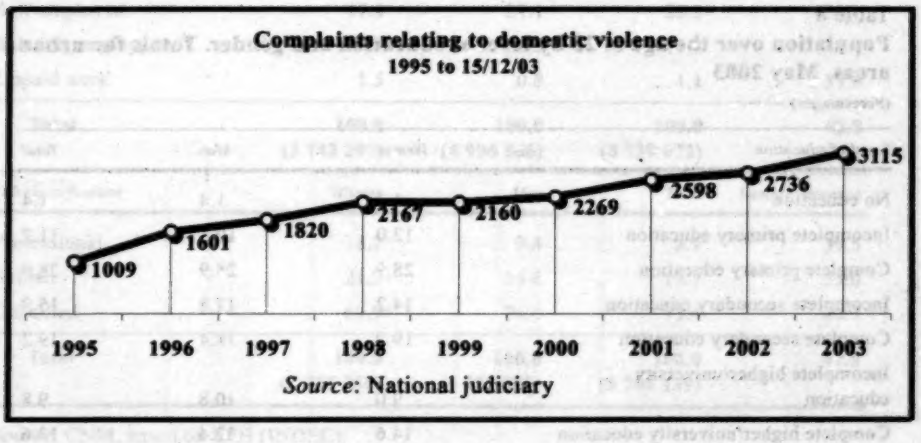
Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Table 10
Net enrolment rates and gender differential. Totals for urban areas, May 2003

Level of education	*Women*	*Men*	*Differential*
Primary	100.9	101.1	-0.2
Secondary	86.5	83.5	3.0
Higher/university	40.4	33.2	7.2

Source: CNM, based on EPH (INDEC).

Figure 5
Evolution of number of complaints relating to domestic violence



Source: National judiciary